

Sexual dysfunction in male adult patients with CHD

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Background: Little is known about the impact of the CHD on sex life. At the same time, the few information available rarely reach those affected. Whether and to what extent sex life is discussed with the treating physician is unknown.

Purpose: To study the knowledge level, problems, wishes and fears of male ACHD regarding their sex life.

Methods: Patients recruited via the German National Register for Congenital Heart Defects were invited to an online survey about sex life. 2,221 male patients were invited to the survey and 371 participated (16.7 %). Patients were divided into four groups based on the CHD severity classification of Warnes et al.: (A) simple CHD (40 patients), (B) moderate CHD (157 patients), (C) complex CHD (152 patients) and (D) other CHD (22 patients).

Results: 132 (35.6 %) patients reported that they had very rarely or no sex at all in the last six months (A: 27.5 %, B: 35 %, C: 37.5 %, D: 40.9 %). Based on the last six months, 71.2 % of the surveyed patients estimated the probability of having a maintaining erection as high or very high (A: 85 %, B: 71.4 %, C: 69.7 %, D: 54.5 %). In the last six months, 60.6% of the interviewed patients, according to their own information, were almost always or always able to get a full erection sufficient for the sexual intercourse (A: 77.5 %, B: 62.4 %, C: 55.3 %, D: 54.5 %). 14.6 % already had erectile dysfunction, but did not discuss this with their physician (A: 10 %, B: 14.6 %, C: 15.1 %, D: 18.2 %). Overall only 3.5 % of the questioned patients stated that they were offered a consultation regarding erectile dysfunction by their treating physician. However, 29.6% would like to receive such counseling during routine medical examinations.

Conclusions: This study reveals important issues regarding sex life and erectile dysfunction in male ACHD. Additionally there were differences found regarding the CHD severity. A discussion about sex life should take place with every ACHD patient during regular clinical contacts to find solutions for possible problems regarding sex life.